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DE RUEHSN #2297 3231610  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8606

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 002297

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WHA/PDA FOR BVASQUEZ; WHA/CEN FOR HTHOMPSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ES](#) [KPAO](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND POLICY SUPPORT  
OPPORTUNITIES COINCIDENT WITH COMMEMORATING THE GREAT WHITE  
FLEET

REF: SECSTATE 153116

¶1. (U) Summary: A U.S. Navy ship visit to El Salvador under the auspices of the upcoming commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Great White Fleet circumnavigating the globe would offer Embassy San Salvador significant public diplomacy and policy support opportunities. As such, mission hopes to be included in any port calls, medical visits, or ceremonial activities conducted in support of the commemoration. End summary.

¶2. (U) Public diplomacy: A port call and, if possible, an associated medical visit by embarked or affiliated personnel, would highlight the important role the U.S. Navy plays in regional humanitarian relief and crisis response. Such an evolution would reinforce the already overall positive image the U.S. Armed Forces enjoy in El Salvador, as well as focus media attention on the benevolent aspects of U.S. naval and military activities in the region. On an even more basic level, U.S. military and naval personnel providing medical attention to Salvadoran citizens would likely generate significant positive coverage in the Salvadoran media. In the event of a ship visit, mission would line up supporting events such as a bilateral press conference, facilitated media interviews, and/or high-level GOES visits and photo ops.

¶3. (U) Policy support opportunities: Commemorative events illustrating the benefits of the GOES maintaining a close operational relationship with the U.S. military could bolster Salvadoran public confidence in the Saca administration's decision to deploy Salvadoran troops in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Public events extolling the role of U.S. naval forces in regional counter-narcotics interdiction operations would also reinforce the wisdom of the GOES hosting the Comalapa Forward Operating Location (FOL), as well as provide a vehicle for highlighting the public security benefits of U.S.-Salvadoran bilateral maritime counter-narcotics efforts.

¶4. (U) In light of the above, mission hopes to be included in Great White Fleet commemorative activities. A ship visit, replete with medical service provision and media outreach, would provide maximum public diplomacy and policy support impact.

¶5. (U) Mission contact for public diplomacy aspects of Great White Fleet Commemorative activities is Public Affairs Officer Robert Riley, 503-2501-2983. Questions regarding policy support opportunities should be directed to Political-military Officer Anthony Stapleton, 503-2501-2040. Glazer